

**MINUTES OF THE MILLVILLE  
PARK & RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING  
April 25, 2017 @ 1:00 p.m.**

In attendance were Chairman Steve Maneri; Committee Member Valerie Faden; Town Manager/Secretary Debbie Botchie; Town Code & Building Official Eric Evans; and Committee Member Paul DuCott. Committee Members Peter Michel and Pat Plocek were absent.

**1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

Deputy Mayor Steve Maneri called the meeting to order at 1 p.m.

**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG**

**3. ROLL CALL**

Mr. Maneri stated the only committee members absent were Peter Michel and Pat Plocek so there is still a quorum of five (5) people.

**4. BACKGROUND – CHAIRMAN STEVE MANERI *Synopsis:* Mr. Maneri will discuss with the members the beginnings of the Town's first park.**

Mr. Maneri stated, in 2014, the Town was looking for property to build a Town park and the first place the Town looked was on Cedar Drive, which is four-point-five (4.5) acres. Mr. Maneri stated when the Town received the appraisal for the property, it was six-hundred-thousand dollars (\$600,000.00), but the owner wanted one million dollars (\$1,000,000.00) and would not negotiate. Mr. Maneri stated the Mayor at the time, Gerald Hocker Jr., tried to talk with the owner to lower the price, but to no avail, and the Town had to look elsewhere. Mr. Maneri further stated around April 7, 2015, former Mayor Hocker found another piece of property for sale, which is four-point-nine (4.9) acres, and had it appraised. Mr. Maneri stated the property on Dukes Drive was appraised at seven-hundred-fifty-thousand dollars (\$750,000.00), but the asking sale price was nine-hundred-ninety-nine-thousand dollars (\$999,000.00). Mr. Maneri stated Mayor Hocker approached Council and, after discussing the matter, came up with the price of eight-hundred-thousand dollars (\$800,000.00) as an offer, which the owner accepted in April 2015. Mr. Maneri stated the State gave the Town a grant of two-hundred-thousand dollars (\$200,000.00), ultimately having the property cost the Town six-hundred-thousand dollars (\$600,000.00), and that is when the start of the Town park came about.

**5. WHAT HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED TO DATE – CHAIRMAN STEVE MANERI / CODE & BLDG. OFFICIAL ERIC EVANS *Synopsis:* Mr. Maneri and Mr. Evans will discuss with the members what has been completed with regards to the design, playground equipment, DelDOT entrance regulations and permitting process, and Soil & Conservation District regulations and permitting process.**

Mr. Maneri stated, up to date, the Town has removed trees and buildings on the property, and have been working with the Town's engineer (AECOM) on the layout of the park, as well as traveling up to Dover to meet with DelDOT, having engineers going through the Soil & Conservation District, and the purchase of the playground equipment, the design of the community building, and the addition of outside bathrooms. Town Code & Building Official Eric Evans stated he met with the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) today and they are going to reduce the eighty (80)-foot buffer down to twenty-five (25) feet as long as the Town cleans the ditch, and Mr. Evans has a price to remove some of the large trees and some of the scrub brush prior to Soil & Conservation going in. Town Manager and Parks Secretary Debbie Botchie showed Committee Member Valerie Faden the location of the buffer. Ms. Faden asked if any of the park property abuts Villas at Cedar Cove. Mr. Evans stated no.

Mr. Evans stated Soil & Conservation said they can come in and clear the ditch but there are some trees which need to be removed prior to Soil & Conservation coming in. Mr. Evans stated he has a quote of eighteen-hundred dollars (\$1800.00) to have the trees and scrub brush from in or on the edge of the ditch removed. Ms. Faden asked if the trees being removed will affect the urban tree canopy, which is a part of the grant the Town received from the Delaware Forest Service. Ms. Botchie stated that is a good question and Ms. Botchie will find out. Mr. Evans stated the trees being removed are more like scrub brush and don't exactly provide a canopy shade. Committee Member Paul DuCott stated he would also like to know if this affects the canopy. Mr. Evans stated he has a contract from the Sussex Conservation District, so they will come in and dredge the ditch, and, after two (2) to three (3) weeks, the Conservation District will come and spread the spoils out in the back eighty (80) feet, which is the right-of-way. Mr. Evans stated once everything in the back is mowed, then the County will bring in the prisoners to come clear out as much of the debris in that area as possible, which will also entail having to get "a 40-yard canister" in there so they'll have a place to dump the debris. Mr. Evans stated the excavator will come in and clean the ditch, so Mr. Evans is guessing there's about five-hundred dollars (\$500.00) more to put in there, but he's not sure about the total amount for all the trash to be cleared.

Mr. Maneri asked about the status of DelDOT. Mr. Evans stated he thinks DelDOT has until May 7, 2017, to give the Town DelDOT's comments, at which point the Town will make the corrections and go back to DelDOT. Ms. Botchie stated she thinks the date is May 2, 2017. Mr. Evans stated to get the prisoners to come in and clean the ditch, there is a three (3)-year waiting period backlog; however, DNREC is going to try to place the Town at the top of the list since this will be for a non-profit municipality community park. Mr. Maneri stated the Town might want to see if it can get some volunteers to clear out the area. Mr. Evans stated if he can't get the prisoners after the cutting is done, the Town will definitely have to come up with an alternative option. Ms. Faden stated the Town could possibly place an advertisement in the paper, asking people in the community to come out and volunteer their time to clear the area. Mr. Evans stated the prisoners can go through and dump the debris in a Bobcat, which will then dump the debris in the canister, all for free. Mr. Evans stated he thinks the Millville volunteers may be a bit too old to be rambling through the brush and picking out debris, some of which is pretty heavy. Ms. Faden stated she understands those volunteers may not be able to do it, which is why she recommends extending the

invitation to the community as a whole and some younger individuals may volunteer. Mr. Evans stated he understands Ms. Faden's point but there has to be a contingency in place in case those who sign up do not show up the day of the clearing; there has to be a group who will definitely do the work the day it's assigned. Mr. Maneri stated the Town would also have to contact its insurance to make sure the Town can get "umbrella policy" coverage to cover the community volunteers on the day of the clean-up. Ms. Faden stated it should be considered which is cheaper: whether it's having volunteers come do the work and put money toward insurance, or to hire a company to do it and pay them. Mr. Evans stated he thinks DNREC and Soil & Conservation knows what they're doing when it comes to the clearing of the land and debris, so to stand there and tell them what to move, there is too much difference of opinion. Mr. DuCott stated he thinks the Town would get more volunteers than Mr. Evans thinks but there might be a risk of too many people signing up and then stepping over one another. Ms. Faden stated having too many people can be controlled by some kind of RSVP mechanism. Mr. Maneri stated he would like for everyone on the Parks & Recreation Committee to come to the site the day of the clearing and supervise for safety. Mr. Evans stated if it comes to having volunteers come in and clear, Mr. Evans would hope everyone on this committee would be down in the dirt, helping him clear.

Mr. Evans stated once he gets the schedule from Lawson's to have the trees removed, Mr. Evans will contact Soil & Conservation to let them know the days of the tree removal and ask when they will have the bush haul done. Mr. Evans stated he will contact DNREC, who will go in and "grade stake" everything, and Mr. Evans will ask about the availability of the prisoners to clear the area. Mr. Evans stated if DNREC says no to the prisoners, Mr. Evans will come back to the Parks & Recreation Committee and let everyone know we need to go to the next step of advertising for volunteers, which the committee will only have one (1) week to round up volunteers. Mr. Maneri stated he's not worried about it. Ms. Botchie stated it will have to be considered the type of gear for the volunteers to wear for their safety. Ms. Faden stated that can be announced once the volunteers sign up. Mr. Evans stated this most likely won't get done until the end of June, but Mr. Evans is trying to get this done by the end of May.

#### **6. ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION LED BY CHAIRMAN STEVE MANERI REGARDING THOUGHTS AND IDEAS OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Synopsis: Mr. Maneri will lead a discussion of the Committee regarding members' thoughts and ideas for the park

Mr. Maneri stated Committee member Pat Plocek, who is absent tonight, had concerns, namely that the community building in the park will be appropriate in size for the area. Mr. Maneri stated since this is a community building owned by the Town, alcohol may not be able to be served on the premises if the building is rented out for an event. Ms. Faden stated another thing to think of is what kind of events will be held at the building because then adequate parking becomes an issue. Mr. Maneri stated Mr. Plocek also feels the 40-yard dash and challenge course will not be used as much, and maybe the pavilion be moved so it doesn't invite vandalism. Ms. Faden stated she would like to see some kind of survey distributed to the residents as to what they want in the park. Mr. Maneri stated the pavilion is placed in the back of the property so

there will be space for events such as movie nights and concerts. Mr. Maneri stated Mr. Plocek also said he would like to see the park connected to the Giant Food shopping center and out to Route 26. Mr. Maneri stated that is a good idea, but there is a logistics problem in that, in order to connect to the shopping center and the Villas at Cedar Cove, the sidewalks would have to cut through Mr. Lord's property which abuts the park property. Mr. Evans stated in order to connect to Route 26, you would have to go down Dukes Drive or cross over somebody else's property. Ms. Botchie stated the Town approached the DelDOT Secretary to try and get a sidewalk down Dukes Drive to connect to Route 26, but the Town was denied because there wasn't "enough traffic flow" down Dukes Drive.

Mr. Evans stated the Town can do a survey to the public but does the Town want to start construction on the park this year or next year. Ms. Faden stated she would like to get some feedback from the people who will be using this park. Ms. Faden stated the Town could create a survey on surveymonkey.com and either email it to everyone or send the link to people via advertisement, and have the people go to the link to take the survey. Mr. DuCott stated he thinks the word "park" is very often associated with children, so it was already discussed about having a "tot lot," a place where parents and grandparents can bring their children, and it's going to be a big plus. Mr. DuCott stated another thing advantageous thing about this park is it will not be directly on Route 26, so a person can get off the road and there's a very nice wooded area, which appeals to people. Mr. DuCott stated he likes the idea of a survey but it would all depend on how many are sent out. Ms. Faden stated the survey could go out with the tax bill this week. Ms. Botchie stated the park will be in the newsletter already. Ms. Faden stated the survey can be set up so either a person will go online or they can mail back the survey. Ms. Botchie asked what kind of questions will be surveyed. Ms. Faden stated the survey could have questions like "what kinds of things would you (the resident) like to see in the park?" Ms. Botchie stated the whole year the Town worked on this, there were all kinds of residents coming in to Town Hall and giving their thoughts, as well as the night of the Town Council meeting (October 11, 2016, to which there was a call-em-all sent out about it), where people spoke up on it. Ms. Faden stated yes, but that was the one time people got to do so. Ms. Botchie asked if the Town is digressing by taking in more feedback. Mr. Maneri stated no, the Town is going to start this park and nothing will digress, but as soon as the Town gets the OK from the State Department, the Town is moving ahead. Mr. Maneri stated the good thing about the survey is to get feedback from the residents on whether or not they want a playground, or fitness stations, or pickleball courts, or what they may want instead. Ms. Faden stated the survey can ask what kinds of use the people would have for the community building and whether there may be a fee to rent it out. Mr. Evans stated the Town currently doesn't charge Town communities or organizations to use the Town Hall, so will that same rule apply to the new community building. Ms. Faden stated she thinks that remains to be seen because it depends on what kind of maintenance there will be, and Ms. Faden thinks there will have to be some kind of funding mechanism. Mr. Maneri stated he currently thinks the only charging taking place will be for the pickleball courts, and Mr. Maneri will go to the Sussex County pickleball association and try to get them to help out with the paying for the lights, because the lights will have to be kept on at night during a game, and that will be some money coming back to the Town. Ms. Faden stated if someone did want to use the community building and have alcohol served, then have the renter pay for the liability

on that. Mr. Maneri stated he's not sure how having alcohol served on Town property is handled. Ms. Botchie stated if there is a one-day event with alcohol, Ms. Botchie assumes the Town can get the one-day liability paid for. Mr. Evans stated the individual renter would have to pay for it. Ms. Faden stated the Town needs to be the one to make sure the individual got the proper clearances and paid for in advance, and the Town would submit the proper paperwork for the liability.

Ms. Botchie stated she liked the idea of putting the survey in with the taxes and people could mail the survey back in with their tax payment. Ms. Faden stated she can see what she can do to create the survey and if the Town either advertises the link on its Web site or in the newspaper, then people can access it that way; or it can go out with the tax bill.

## **7. ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION OF PATH FORWARD – CHAIRMAN STEVE**

**MANERI** *Synopsis:* Mr. Maneri will lead a discussion of the Committee regarding how to organize and advance the Committee's thoughts and ideas, including but not limited to drafting reports and proposed park policies.

Mr. Maneri stated if DelDOT gives the Town the entrance first, the parking lot is going in right away because the Town can still be building while the ditch is cleaned out. Ms. Faden asked how many spaces are in the parking lot. Mr. Maneri stated he believes it's close to fifty (50) spaces. Mr. Evans stated he thinks it's closer to forty-five (45) spaces. Ms. Faden asked how many people will be able to use the building. Mr. Evans stated the more spaces you have, the more impervious material you have, and the more impervious material you have, the bigger the pond you're going to need. Mr. Evans stated if you take into accountability all of the impervious spaces – the playground, pickleball courts, the paver detail, the building, the parking lot – the Town could put in two-hundred (200) parking spots for thirty (30) vehicles to use on a daily basis but you have to build a pond big enough to hold all the impervious material. Ms. Faden asked if the Town could rope off some of the space for extra parking. Mr. Evans stated yes, but the Town would still need to have the pond because the clamshell parking lot is still being considered as if it were concrete. Ms. Faden asked if there is another impervious, ecologically-friendly material to use for the parking lot. Mr. Evans stated grass and/or mud, but when it comes to overflow parking, people will be allowed to park alongside one side of Dukes Drive. Ms. Faden asked what the people occupancy number is for the community building. Mr. Evans stated the building's open space should hold one-hundred-thirty-three (133) people. Ms. Faden asked about bathroom access when the building is not open. Mr. Evans stated there is a separate, smaller maintenance building which will have outside bathroom access. Ms. Faden asked if anyone heard back from any of the solar companies regarding using solar power for the buildings, which might be relocated. Mr. Evans stated the only thing the Town received was in relation to how a carport would look and the possibility of a gazebo, but it didn't have panels on it. Mr. Evans stated if you try to move the building, there is a great possibility of losing the DelDOT-approved entrance and losing parking spots. Mr. Evans stated the Town could alternatively build a carport made of solar panels (like what Ocean View has), and generate just as much solar energy as the solar trees would have. Mr. Evans stated the only thing the Town would have to do is locate where the panels would go and run the conduit from the panels to the building, but the matter and method of payment has got to be reviewed.

Ms. Botchie stated, from the outset, her concern has been shade, and Ms. Botchie does understand the Town will get trees but there needs to be some coverage for around the plaza. Ms. Faden asked if the Town could look into getting a solar panel pergola for the plaza area. Mr. DuCott asked if the solar panels are to offset the cost of lighting the park or if it's to power the building lights and other electrical needs in general. Ms. Faden stated she thinks it's for the general electrical needs plus she would like to get monies for a community sustainability program for the Town, so if the Town submits for the grant by June 2, the Town will get this money to help create a community sustainability plan. Mr. DuCott stated once solar power for a place gets up and running correctly, it's very useful but there are lots of hidden costs, depending on which company you use; and Mr. DuCott wants to make sure there are some clear parameters around the money set in place. Ms. Faden stated the Town has four (4) or five (5) companies of which the Town is getting estimates on what they can do and for how much. Ms. Faden stated the cost may be around forty-thousand dollars (\$40,000.00), but the Town can get up to around forty-one-thousand dollars (\$41,000.00) in grant money.

Ms. Botchie stated she has highlighted some eligible grant money projects which would be good for the Town's park. Ms. Botchie stated there are plenty of different types of grants, which need to be applied for one at a time, including for the challenge course, pickleball courts, the parking, and the walking trail with fitness stops; but the Town cannot apply for the community building. Ms. Botchie stated if the Town wants to apply for the walking trail, the application has to be submitted by May 26, but if the Town gets the grant, the Town cannot start the project until it receives the grant monies. Ms. Botchie asked which items to apply for first. Mr. Evans stated he thinks the challenge course and the fitness trail with workout stations will be the two most expensive (the pickleball courts alone are about seven-thousand dollars (\$7,000.00) per court, without fencing or lighting), but the parking should be a priority. Mr. Evans stated he can contact AECOM if the Town wants to know how much the entrance will cost, but Mr. Evans guessed it could run up from forty-thousand dollars (\$40,000.00) to sixty-thousand dollars (\$60,000.00). Ms. Botchie stated she has no good faith in DelDOT getting the price back to the Town on time before the May 26 deadline, so maybe the Town should pick another item grant to apply for first. The committee agreed to apply for the walking trail with the fitness equipment.

## **8. ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEXT MEETING**

The next Parks & Recreation meeting will be on May 18, 2017, at 1 p.m.

## **9. ADJOURNMENT**

Ms. Faden motioned to adjourn at 2:37 p.m. Mr. DuCott seconded the motion. Motion carried 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,  
Matt Amerling, Town Clerk